

"Muhammad is....the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets....."

Holy Qur-an, 33 : 40.

"There will be no Prophet after me."

Muhammad.

The 1935 Islamic Review

Founded by the Late AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

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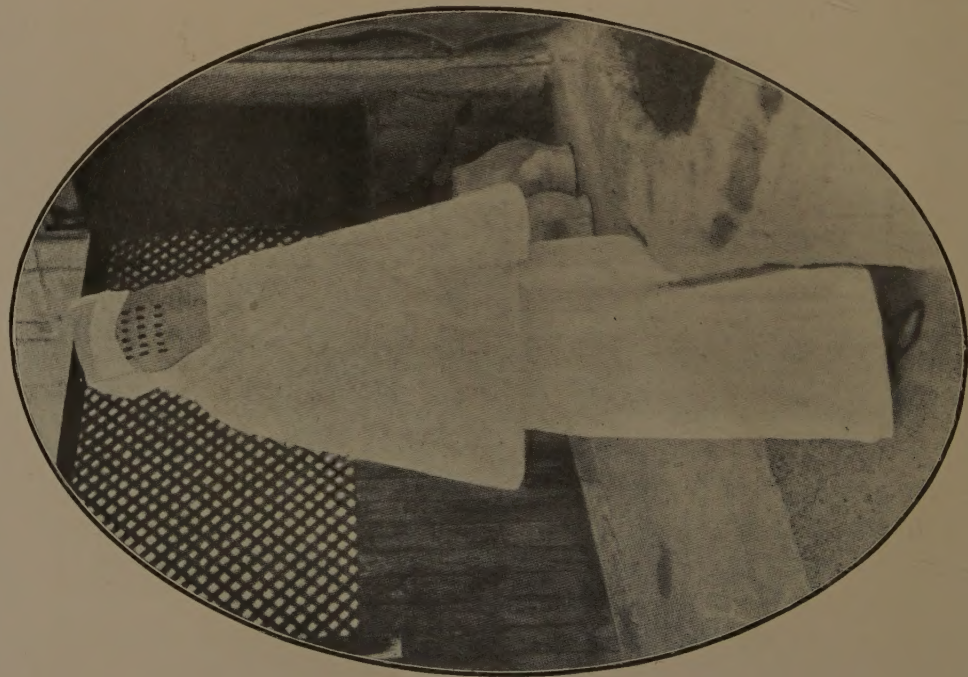
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THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

VOL. XXIII.

SHAWWAL, 1353 A.H.

No. 1.

JANUARY, 1935 A.C.

A DECLARATION

I, Nina Kathleen Darke, daughter of John and Mina Darke of Streatham, S. W. 16, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I adopt Islam as my religion ; that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone ; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant ; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc. ; that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La ilaha il-Allah Muhammad ur Rasul-Allah.

(There is no object worthy of worship but God and Muhammad is His Apostle.)

MY ALLEGIANCE TO ISLAM

BY MRS. C. SA'EEDA NAMIER

I was born in a Tatar village in Russia, where my father, a Roman Catholic Pole and an exile from Poland, was a doctor. He married a Muslim woman who became a Christian in order to marry him, as in old Russia marriages between Christians and non-Christians were not allowed. My mother never went to church or took part in any

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religious service elsewhere, and my earliest recollections are of her whispering to herself the Muslim prayers whenever she was alone. I grew up in the shadow of a Mosque, and all my childhood memories are bound up with the call of the Muezzin, the Tatars saying their prayers at home and in the fields, and the whole sober, clean and decent life of the Muslim community which I sub-consciously compared with the drunkenness, brutality and filth of the neighbouring Russian villages.

Both my parents died early, and I was brought up among the Russian intelligentsia without any religion, principles or traditions. I must say I never gave much thought to spiritual matters until, after having lived in England and America, I imperceptibly became convinced that one must have some guiding principle in one's life and some kind of moral code. I studied Christianity, but, even stripped of all the trappings of ritualism and superstitions, it could not satisfy me because I could not accept the fundamental principles of Christianity—the divinity of Jesus and the doctrine of the original sin and redemption. It seemed to me that the true God was completely overshadowed by the tremendous figure of Christ, and I could not believe that the suffering and death of one person, however saintly, even divine, would redeem the sins of the whole world, especially as the world went on sinning as if nothing happened. So naturally I turned to Islam. I say naturally because I always had a sort of nostalgia for Islam, brought up, as I was in its atmosphere, from my earliest childhood. It was like coming home, and the more I read the Qur-án and the books on Islam by Muslim writers,—the most lucid and convincing of them being those of the Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din,—the more I became convinced that it is the only true religion,—a religion for people who think and do not want to shut their eyes to the realities of life and the discoveries of science.

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

I could not help comparing it to the teaching of Jesus which, lofty as it is, either leads to asceticism and virtual denial of life, or demands an enormous structure of casuistry and sophistry in order to adapt it to the earthly life of mankind. How could it stand comparison with the pure logic of Islam—submission to the will of God and striving towards His perfection? There one has not the theological dogmas and magic formulas for salvation, but a perfect guidance and a moral code for the whole conduct of life, which does not demand denying the evidence of one's reason, nor the violation of one's natural feelings. Indeed, I cannot understand how any thinking person can fail seeing it. That is why so many critics of Islam fall back on the "bad life" of the people in Muslim countries, wilfully shutting their eyes to the fact that their vices are due not to the teachings of Islam but to the dire poverty and ignorance in which they live owing to the physical and political conditions of their countries. My only regret is that I did not see the truth earlier, as it would not only have made me happier, but would have helped me to become a more useful member of the community.

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

WHERE WE DIFFER AND WHY WE DIFFER

BY THE RT. HON'BLE AL-HAJ LORD HEADLEY

When one of our greatest heroes of the Near or Middle East or Far East—General Chas. Gordon of Khartoum—said he "failed to notice the sect of the Pharisees amongst the Muslims, and that many of the unamiable qualities of Christians were not to be found in the followers of Islam" he spoke as one having authority. Charles Gordon had a wide and intimate knowledge of his Eastern Muslim friends to whom he was deeply attached. He doubtless recognised the impossibility of being a good

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Muslim without being a good Christian—for Duty to God and Duty to Neighbour, forms the one solid basis of Islam and *unfettered* Christianity.

Where then does the difference come in? The answer is really very simple. All the bitterness and strife in the Christian churches are due entirely to the establishment of certain dogmas invented by Monks and Priests in the Middle Ages. These men, of the St. Dunstan, St. Gregory, and St. Athanasius type, laid down certain articles of faith, and went so far as to claim that without a belief in those dogmas salvation was impossible.

By these highly questionable means prelates and monks played upon the superstitions of the ignorant people and frightened them into beliefs which they did not themselves understand or beliefs which they used as a means to an end, *viz.*, the establishment of the infallibility of priestcraft and the supremacy of the Church over the State.

The main dogmas of Christianity are:—

- (1) The Divinity of Christ (*i.e.*, that Christ was actually God Almighty).
- (2) The Trinity (as explained in the Athanasian Creed).
- (3) The Sacraments (Baptism and the Supper of the Lord).
- (4) The Atonement; and to at least one branch of Christianity,
- (5) The Immaculate Conception.

Orthodox Christianity of to-day says that without a firm belief in these dogmas human beings cannot be saved—they must be damned.

The Creed has it thus:—"Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and

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undefiled : without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.”
 “He therefore that will be saved : must thus think of the Trinity.” It is all quite explicit ; no ambiguity is to be detected, and the final paragraph “ This is the Catholick Faith ; which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved ” leaves not the slightest doubt in the mind of the trembling sinner as to what fate awaits him if he does not accept and “ believe ” the hopeless tangle of heterogeneous improbabilities to which he is asked to blindly subscribe.

The Muslim says :—“ Your dogmas mean nothing : they are useless and unintelligible to sensible, educated, persons of the present-day, but we do not for a moment suppose that you will be damned for honestly believing in them. It seems to us a misfortune that you have been misled into taking on to your Faith much that is quite unnecessary and erroneous.”

Priestcraft or sacerdotalism do not find favour with the Muslims. Every man has the keys of Heaven in his own hands and can draw near the Mercy-seat of his Almighty Protector and Cherisher at any moment he pleases without any reference to any other human being—Prophet, Priest or King. His whole creed is summed up in his belief in God, surrender to His Will and beneficence to all his fellow-creatures—including the lower animals given us for our use.

At the present moment there is a widespread complaint that Christians are becoming irreligious, that they do not say their prayers, and do not go to church in large numbers as formerly. The truth is that they are tired of openly professing a belief in dogmatic teachings which do not appeal to their intelligence or to their hearts. Young people—the rising generation—who prefer the open air on Sunday mornings to the heated interiors of churches are found fault with for being honest and telling the truth. Their open confession of inability to understand the

astounding intricacies of the Creeds or subscribe to the cruel injustices of the dogmas is to my mind a healthy sign—indicating a craving for what is honest and true. It seems not impossible that this open revolt against Mediæval superstition and dogmatic intolerance may lead up to a renaissance of real Religion more in keeping with the requirements of the day and more in harmony with what we believe to have been the original simple teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

TWO PARABLES FROM THE QUR-ÂN

The Qur-ân is a book of wisdom as well as of guidance. It not only teaches us right conduct, but explains, for those who are able to understand, that such conduct is based on the true principles of our own nature as made by God.

As spiritual life is on a different plane from our animal or material life, the former can only be indicated roughly by the comparisons implied in a parable.

The Qur-ânic Parables sum up, in a few graphic words, some spiritual experience which has to be felt to be fully appreciated. Conciseness, beauty, and comprehensiveness combine with literary grace to enforce the lesson.

There is the Parable of the self-deluded hypocrite.¹ A man self-sufficient in his own wisdom, wants to show that wisdom to his fellow-men. What he wants is light. But he kindles a fire. The blaze is more impressive in the eyes of the multitude, and he gets applause. The flames are fitful, but they light for a time the whole of the circle around him. In a few moments the light is out, and the darkness is worse than ever before. He and his companions grope about, but they lose their way. They cannot see. But in their consternation they are also dumb and dare not speak to each other. Even if they did speak, they are all so wrapt in selfishness that they would not

¹ The Holy Qur-ân, 2 : 17-18.

TWO PARABLES FROM THE QUR-ÁN

hear each other in moments of darkness or difficulty. Perhaps their recriminations drown each other. They failed to see that the true source of light is God, and they will never find the Path in that way.

Another Parable, worked out in words of great power, enforces a similar lesson.¹ A rain-laden cloud appears in the sky. Such a cloud is a blessing to normal men, as it brings fertilising showers which produce abundant crops. But to the warped mind, which rejects Faith, there is only terror. "In it are zones of darkness and thunder and lightning." Those who do not see God's working in His world are oppressed with mortal fear. "They press their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap." But they forget that God is ever round all things, and He is also round the rejecters of Faith. They may try to exclude God's call from their hearts, but it is there. If they open their eyes, "the lightning all but snatches away their sight." You would think they might profit by the light. "Every time the light helps them, they walk therein." But as they reject the source of the light, it does not profit them. "When the darkness grows on them, they stand still." The one lesson they have to learn is that it is not their powers or their merits that will enable them to get spiritual fulfilment. "If God willed, He could take away their faculty of hearing and seeing, for God hath power over all things." Nor is the physical light all that is necessary to show them the way. It must penetrate their mind and intelligence. It must illuminate their being. They must offer their wills in complete submission to God's will. Islam demands nothing less than this. But if once this submission is made, God's grace works slowly, silently, and effectually. Out of the storm it will produce peace, contentment, and a spiritual harvest beyond the dreams of mortal man.

A. YUSUF ALI.

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 2 : 19-20.

THE HOLY QUR-ÁN AND ITS COMMENTARY

BY THE LATE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

(Continued from Vol. XXII, p. 375.)

SECTION 13.

V. 104.—The opposition and insolence of the Jews had now reached such a pitch that when they came to the meetings convened by the Prophet, they would, by way of sarcasm, use words in addressing him which would, with but little tongue-twisting, convey a very insolent meaning. Even when speaking formally to the Prophet, they would pronounce the words necessary for that purpose in such a way as to change their meanings from noble to base.¹ One such word was "*Ráiná*," with long sounds of both the a's, meaning "Please listen to us." But pronounced in a different way with the a's short it will mean "This man is foolish and devoid of wisdom and intellect." In citing this instance, the Holy Qur-án intends to point out the extent to which the insolence of the Jews had risen. The Holy Qur-án deemed it undesirable that the faithful companions of the Prophet should use words in addressing him which could be twisted by others into abuse, so it has laid down that the companions should not use the word *Ráiná* on such occasions but *Unzurna* which means "Wait for us" or "Pay some attention to what we say," and is a safer substitute for the former word. A very ennobling lesson is imparted in this verse—namely, that the believers should avoid using any such words in their conversations as might even distantly hint at a bad meaning. This is one of the noblest precepts of the Qur-án with regard to behaviour in society.

V. 105.—Finally after reviewing the conduct of the unbelieving Jews, the Qur-án goes on to say that at bottom they abhor the idea that any blessing should be

¹ Ch. IV, v. 46.

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sent to the Holy Prophet and his followers. In their fanaticism these people lose sight of the supreme fact that Divine favours and blessings are not limited to any one person or race. God sends down His blessings to whomsoever He will, and among His blessings the best is His revealed Word, of which also the recipient is he who pleases Him. The perplexity of the Jews on this score was for two reasons : first, that any one outside their fold should be the recipient of Divine message, and, secondly, that there should be a new Dispensation in the very presence of the Torah.

V. 106.—The reply to the first of these objections has been already given in the previous verse. With regard to the second the Qur-án draws man's attention to the laws of Nature. How every day immoveable things come to an end, but in their place other things are brought into being. Many a time people forget certain facts of existence which are repeated again to refresh their memory. Sometimes these new things or new facts are the same as the old ones, but often they are better. Similarly in this particular matter of revelation, the Jews had forgotten a large part of the original Torah, and whatever remained of the Law was not sufficient to meet the demands of future ages.

The Torah was, after all, a law for a particular time. We may see for ourselves how unsuitable are its provisions for our own day. So it was necessary that a better teaching should replace it at some period or other in history. It is this argument which the Qur-án advances in its own support, namely, that its bringing the new Law was quite in accordance with the process of Nature prevailing everywhere else. For a homelier instance of this process of Nature we may take the coming of the season of spring. With the advent of spring Nature on all

sides makes a thorough replacement of the old foliage by new. The season demands this substitution and Nature has to respond to it. It may be objected here, why should this principle not apply as well to the Qur-ánic Dispensation, and why, as the Muslims believe, should the lapse of time not necessitate its replacement by a new Dispensation. But such an objection will not stand, if we consider the fact that only such things are replaced in Nature which are temporary, and are not permanent in their functions. But things such as the sun, the moon and other planets of the firmament, which have a permanence, in the very nature of their existence, never change or give place to new substitutes. Before the revelation of the Qur-án, every nation was passing through a stage that made it stand in need of a provisional law or one adapted only for local application. Moreover, seeing that it was in the knowledge of God that the day was at hand when all nations would be united as a single people, it was not proper that a law should be given, before the time was ripe for it, which would be of a permanent and universal nature. But when that time did arrive, it was natural and quite in the fitness of things that such a law should be revealed to the end that it might create uniformity among different sections of humanity ; and this era was ushered in at the Revelation of the Qur-án and all the nations were united in a very short time. It was then that a comprehensive book of a permanent nature should have been revealed, and it was revealed, in the form of the Holy Qur-án. What we have to determine is, whether this is a book to satisfy the needs, not only of the present age but of those that may come afterwards as well. For myself, I can confidently assert, on the basis of my own convictions, that it does contain comprehensive teachings and broad principles of conduct and belief applicable to every phase of human life.

THE HOLY QUR-ÁN AND ITS COMMENTARY

Towards the end of the verse there is a hint at another fact, namely, that nothing in the world can prevent God from taking this disputed step seeing that He is Supreme over all things. *Qádir* and *Qadír* are both words indicating the attributes of God and express almost the same sense. They do not imply, however, power used at random or without discrimination. Wisdom and intelligence are conditions precedent to their manifestations or, in other words, *Qadír* possesses the power of doing such things only as are dictated by wisdom and intelligence, and it is also essential that the measure of the power applied should neither exceed nor fall short of the needs of the situation. Hence it is for *Qadír* to come into play as soon as there is any shortage anywhere in what is needful and to make up the deficiency at once. Now, if revelation be sent only for the guidance of man, it is but just that the whole of mankind should receive the benefit of the Divine intention. The use of the word *Qadír* is thus an argument in itself. In the first place, the Torah had certainly not penetrated to every corner of the world, and, in the second, from the point of view both of the New and the Old Testaments, their commandments were intended for a particular nation only. If so, how could the wisdom of that Being, Whose purpose is to make up for the deficiency and shortcoming of every needful thing, remain satisfied with the Torah? It would be a monstrous injustice, if, while on the one hand the Jews would not allow the rest of the world to benefit by the blessed teachings of the Torah, on the other, God, being *Qadír*, should be watching the situation so created with indifference! Thus, we find, incidentally, that the words that come at the end of a verse indicating any attribute of God, often constitute by themselves arguments on the point under discussion. Thus as *Qadír*, it is the purpose of God, when He finds the whole of humanity united, to

make such an arrangement as will convey his revealed message to all its different sections and parts.

Certain prejudiced critics, especially among non-Muslims, have drawn a wrong conclusion from this verse, namely, and that because God is *Qadîr*, He has abrogated certain verses of the Qur-án itself, as a matter of necessity. In support of this view it is their custom to cite a verse from the chapter entitled "The Bee," and to infer therefrom that God, in the exercise of His power as *Qadîr*, has actually abrogated certain verses. These people fail to grasp the elemental truth that *Qadîr* exercises His powers only where such exercise is demanded by wisdom, and wisdom it was that demanded the abrogation of the Torah. But where is the wisdom in abrogating the verses of the Qur-án? It is true that the particular verse of the chapter "The Bee" speaks of the abrogation of some Divine revelation. But there is no reference here to the Holy Qur-án at all. It is a general statement to the effect that God can abrogate any of his revelation if he so chose. Now, it is an admitted fact, that the chapter "The Bee," was revealed at Mecca, and among those that have enumerated the verses supposed to be abrogated, not one has included therein any Meccan revelation; hence it is clear that the verse in question never implied the abrogation of any Qur-ánic verses. The truth behind the dispute over this theory of abrogation is that whenever it appeared to one of these critics that a certain verse was in conflict with another, he at once preferred to jump to the conclusion that one of them must be abrogating the other, rather than ascribe this apparent conflict to his own lack of understanding. At one time the number of such abrogated verses was believed to be more than one hundred, since when it began to diminish, until by the 12th or the 13th century, it came down to the minimum of four or five. Still later, more erudite scho-

THE HOLY QUR-ÂN AND ITS COMMENTARY

lars have succeeded in eliminating all save two, for there is no other verse besides that in the chapter "The Bee,"² and the one under discussion in this chapter, which refers in a general way to any act of abrogation by God, and as for the latter verse the context clearly shows that it refers to the Torah.

The preceding sections have recounted the objections raised by the Jews. The first of these is that there was no need for any revelation while the Torah existed. The second is that while the Jews existed, revelation could not have been sent to a person belonging to another race. The preceding verse has put forward the laws of nature as an argument in refuting the objection of the Jews. But that which follows deals a smashing blow at this conception of the "Chosen people."

V. 107.—God is the Master of the heaven and the earth. Now, if the Jews have no other Helper and Supporter but He, to whom else are the other nations to turn for help and support? And if He is equally the master of all the nations, why should one particular nation be favoured with a blessing to the exclusion of all the others? In fact these people have no reasonable argument to bring forward.

V. 108.—Even in the days of Moses they used to plague that Prophet with all manners of meaningless questions, and the same conduct was now being pursued by them in their dealings with the Prophet Muhammad. This surely was departing from the path of rectitude, the truth of the matter being that they were quite carried away by their feelings of jealousy.

V. 109.—More than this, they tried to induce the Muslims to forsake the right path, and that in spite of the fact that the coming of the Prophet was in accordance with the demands of truth and justice. So the Qur-ân

² Ch. XVI : 101.

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asks the Prophet to go on forgiving them till the kingdom of God is finally established in the world. Here again reference is made to God as the All-Powerful Being—*Qadir*,—and even if the word were to be taken in its ordinary sense, it would be quite understandable to any one that God, as such, could at His own pleasure have given the Muslim power over the Jew. But, as I have already pointed out, the word has a deeper significance and requires to be associated with the quality of wisdom which quality demands that whatever comes to pass should take place in accordance with the fitness of things.

V. 110.—It is to fulfil this requirement that the Muslims are asked to be mindful of their prayers and alms, in other words, to try their utmost to qualify themselves for Divine blessing by virtuous deeds, since no good deed is ever wasted. God is *Basir* (Seeing), and, as such, it is for Him to see to the recompense of actions. He will surely take notice of the fact that while one nation is striving to do good, another, on the basis of that utterly false theory that paradise is exclusively its own whatever it may do, is bent on making mischief. These people are foolish inasmuch as they do not realise that God is *Basir*, *i.e.*, observant of human actions.

V. 111.—The Jews have this false idea, and the Christians also, that they will enter paradise, in any case. If you ask them, however, what reasonable ground they possess for so believing, they cannot answer you.

V. 112.—In fact, there is only one way of attaining the heavenly life, the life of eternal bliss and happiness, and that is by the surrender of one's self to God and by doing His will and striving to perform acts of kindness. And when a man has done all this, there is no reason why the outcome of his works should be anything but good, and why he should not be kept safe from all fear and grief. The greatest blessing in heaven of which the

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Qur-ân speaks, is this safety from fear and grief, and if we ponder over the matter it will at once appear that there can be no greater blessing than such a state of the human mind. So long as the consequence of an action is not yet manifest, and there is a chance that some loss or misfortune may follow, the resulting condition of mind is what we call "Fear." But when the apprehended consequence does come to pass, it creates what we call "Grief" or "Sorrow." Thus the best description of paradise that the Qur-ân could give was that there would be no fear or grief in it.

V. 113.—The Jews and Christians agree in believing that the heavenly life is exclusively theirs, but at the same time they do not recognise any good, each in the other. An attitude like this is simply foolish on the face of it. One could understand it if there were any such thing in religion as distinction of race. But with God there is only one religion, namely, to acknowledge His Holy Existence and to follow the line of virtuous action in accordance with His beneficent Will. Whosoever will seek to order his life in this manner will be close to God.

V. 114.—The outward sign of this closeness to God is to attend the Mosque, the House of God, for His remembrance. But, on the contrary, these people prevent one another from attending the sacred House and strain every nerve to decorate it. In the natural course of things, however, it is the duty of every man to respect such places and to show reverence towards them, but in no case to seek their decoration. Thus it will be seen that theirs is a perverted nature whereby they must inevitably meet with disappointment in this life and also in the life to come. That this is so is borne out by the facts of history.

V. 115.—As a matter of fact, the sacred houses dedicated to God are not the exclusive property of any parti-

cular nation or country. God's presence is everywhere whether it be in the East or the West. Everywhere His Will is found in the process of being carried out.

V. 116.—It is a pity that people should ever have regarded any of their fellow-men as the veritable sons of God. In doing this they forget that God is free from all blemishes¹ and defects, and that to stand in need of a son is a blemish, inasmuch as the son is a sort of possession of the father, whom the father requires as an obedient agent for the carrying out of his wishes more faithfully than might be possible in the case of another. But God is the Master of earth and heaven, and everything in them pays complete and unreserved homage to Him, so that there is no lack of obedience anywhere and no need of any son for that purpose. In the next verse, verse 117, the Qur-án advances another and a subtler proof of the fact that God cannot be the father of any one.

(*To be continued.*)

PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA.²

BY LADY EVELYN COBBOLD

“If this be Islam,” asks Goethe, “do we not all live in Islam?” “Yes,” answers Carlyle, “all of us that have any moral life, we all live so.”

I am often asked when and why I became a Moslem. I can only reply that I do not know the precise moment when the truth of Islam dawned on me. It seems that I have always been a Moslem. This is not so strange when one remembers that Islam is the natural religion that a child left to itself would develop. Indeed, as a Western critic once described it, “Islam is the religion of common sense.”

¹ Here the Arabic word is *Subhán*. Just as the word *Hamd* indicates that God gathers in His own person all the different attributes of perfection, so the word *Subhán* indicates that He is free from all attributes of weakness and imperfection. It is for this reason that whenever any occasion like that under discussion arises, the Qur-án uses this particular word.

² *Introduction to “Pilgrimage to Mecca”* (Murray, London).

PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

As a child I spent the winter months in a Moorish villa on a hill outside Algiers, where my parents went in search of sunshine. There I learnt to speak Arabic, and my delight was to escape my governess and visit the Mosques with my Algerian friends, and unconsciously I was a little Moslem at heart. After three years' wintering at Mustapha Supérieure we left the villa for good, much to my despair, but in time I forgot my Arab friends, my prayers in the Mosque and even the Arabic language. Some years went by, and I happened to be in Rome staying with some Italian friends, when my host asked me if I would like to visit the Pope. Of course I was thrilled, and, clad all in black with a long veil, I was admitted into the august presence in company with my host and his sister. When His Holiness suddenly addressed me, asking if I was a Catholic, I was taken aback for a moment and then replied that I was a Moslem. What possessed me I don't pretend to know, as I had not given a thought to Islam for many years. A match was lit and I then and there determined to read up and study the Faith. The more I read and the more I studied, the more convinced I became that Islam was the most practical religion, and the one most calculated to solve the world's many perplexing problems, and to bring to humanity peace and happiness. Since then I have never wavered in my belief that there is but one God; that Moses, Jesus, Mohamed and others were Prophets, divinely inspired, that to every nation God has sent an apostle, that we are not born in sin, and that we do not need any redemption, that we do not need anyone to intercede between us and God, Whom we can approach at all times, and that no one can intercede for us, not even Mohamed or Jesus, and that our salvation depends entirely on ourselves and our actions.

The word "Islam" means surrender to God. It also means peace. A Moslem is one who is "in harmony

with the Decrees of the Author of This World," one who has made his peace with God and His creatures.

Islam is based on two fundamental truths, on the Oneness of God and on the Brotherhood of Man, and is entirely free of any encumbrances of theological dogma. Above everything else, it is a positive faith. Mohamed was once asked "What is Islam?" to which he replied: "Obedience to God's commandments and Kindness to His creatures." On another occasion he was asked "What is a Moslem?" and he replied "A Moslem is that man from whose tongue and hand people are safe" and on yet another occasion he said "The test of man's religion lies in his dealings with others." In the Koran we read:

And who is better than he who calls people to God and does good. . . . Let your weapon of defence be kindness, and, lo and behold, he that has been your enemy becomes your bosom friend. . . . Surely God enjoins the maintaining of justice and the doing of good to others. . . . Good deeds abide for ever and are the most acceptable to God, and the most worthy of His reward.

Everywhere in the Koran to believe is to do good. To believe and not do good cannot exist in Islam.

It remains for me to say a few words about the place of the pilgrimage in Islam. Every Muslim, male or female, is required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once. Five conditions are, however, necessary in order to make this injunction obligatory:—

- (1) Ripeness of intelligence and discernment in the pilgrim.
- (2) Perfect freedom and liberty.
- (3) Possession of the means of transport and subsistence during the journey.
- (4) Possession of means sufficient to support the pilgrim's family during his absence.
- (5) The possibility and practicability of the journey.

PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

The influence of the Haj cannot be exaggerated. To be a member of that huge congregation gathered together from the four corners of the earth on this sacred occasion and on this sacred spot, and to join with them in all humility in the glorification of God, is to have one's consciousness impressed by the full significance of the Islamic Ideal, is to be privileged to participate in one of the most soul-inspiring experiences that have ever been granted to human beings. To visit the birthplace of Islam, to tread the sacred ground hallowed by the memories of Mohamed's long toil and sufferings in his struggle to call erring humanity back to God, is to re-live those glorious years of sacrifice and martyrdom, is to have one's soul kindled by that celestial fire which lighted up the whole earth. But this is not all. The Haj above everything else makes for unity among Moslems. If there is anything that unifies the scattered forces of Islam and imbues them with mutual sympathy it is the pilgrimage. It provides them with a central point to which they rally from all corners of the earth. It creates for them annually an occasion to meet, and know one another, to exchange views and compare experiences and unite their various efforts to the common good. Distances are annihilated. Differences of sect are set aside. Divergences of race and colour cease to exist in this fraternity of faith that unites all Moslems in one great brotherhood and makes them conscious of the glorious heritage that is theirs. Then, when the religious duties are over, merchants from all lands discuss trade and commerce and transact business with each other, theologians and jurists discuss questions of religion and jurisprudence, scientists the latest advances in science, men of letters literature, financiers problems of finance, politicians and statesmen questions of national and international politics. The institution of Haj does not represent to the Moslems merely a sacred institution but also a

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League of Nations, an International Academy of Art and Science, and an International Chamber of Commerce all in one. Professor Snouk Hurgronje says: "The ideal of a league of human races has indeed been approached by Islam more nearly than by any other; for the League of Nations founded on the basis of Mohamed's religion takes the principle of the equality of all human races so seriously as to put other communities to shame." Sir Thomas Arnold says: "But above all Islam ordains a yearly gathering of believers of all nations and languages, brought together from all parts of the world to pray in that sacred place (The Kaaba) towards which their faces are set in every hour of private worship in their distant homes. No fetch of religious genius could have conceived a better expedient for impressing on the minds of the faithful a sense of their common life and their common brotherhood in the bond of faith. Here is a supreme act of common worship, the Negro of the West Coast of Africa meets the Chinaman from the distant East; the courtly and polished Ottoman recognises his brother Moslem in the wild islander from the farthest end of the Malayan Sea. At the same time, throughout the whole Mohammedan world the hearts of believers are lifted up in sympathy with their more fortunate brethren gathered together in the sacred city (Mecca) as in their own homes they celebrate the festival of 'Id-al-Adha or (as it is called in Turkey) 'the feast of Bayram.'"

In the following account I have spoken of the ceremonial rites performed during the pilgrimage. These are merely commemorative acts designed to remind us of the trials of Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael, so that we may be brought to realise more keenly the infinite mercy and the all-transforming grace of God. They must not be taken to mean that ceremonialism or ritualism plays any part in Islam. As some one has said, these acts are in the nature of a historical pageant to commemorate the

PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

birth of the Arab nation. How small a part ceremonialism or mere form plays in Islam is illustrated by the following verse from the Koran: "It is not righteousness to turn in prayer towards the east or the west, but he is righteous who believes in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Books and the Prophets, and gives of his wealth, in spite of his love for it, to the near of kin, the orphan, the needy, the wayfarer and the beggar, and for the manumission of slaves, and prays and pays the poor-rate, and keeps his promise when he gives one, and is patient in adversity, affliction, and in times of conflict."

[We have reproduced *verbatim* the *Introduction* to Lady Evelyn Cobbold's book *Pilgrimage to Mecca*. We reviewed it in our October, 1934, issue. We then said that Lady Evelyn Cobbold throughout her book fought fearlessly for Islam and ably refuted the misconceptions rampant in Europe about it, and that from our own viewpoint it was here that the real value of the book lay.

It is interesting to study the reactions of the English (Christian) press towards that portion of the book. For as a travel book they all agree that it is a most fascinating and charming work. It is in connection with the religious matter in it that opinions are sharply divided, for while some, like the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* (to mention only two) hail it as a welcome relief from the usual tornado of ignorant and bigoted anti-Islamic literature produced in England, and even wish that Lady Evelyn had devoted more space to the exposition of Islam, others wish she had not written about religious matters at all, and point to this as the only fault in an otherwise admirable book.

That such an unanswerable defence of Islam should prove distasteful to those who find pleasure in reading the usual calumnies about it is not surprising, but to the credit of the great English nation let it be said that these

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are happily very much in the minority, and to the credit of the able author let it also be said that even these were forced to admit that the book is accurate, reliable, straightforward, honest and sincere. A greater tribute from an avowed adversary can hardly be imagined, but perhaps the best tribute of all is that paid to the book by the Methodist Magazine which makes it the Book of the Month and devotes no less than three pages to the summary of the main events in it. The book has been called unique, memorable, vital, valuable, etc., etc., and we assert that such praise from non-Muslims is not unmerited. Its publication has, moreover, supplied a new practical illustration to the following statement about the Haj by S. H. Leader in his *Veiled Mysteries of Egypt* :—

The importance of the pilgrimage as a great bond of spiritual inspiration has scarcely been realised by most writers. There are from 60,000 to 90,000 pilgrims to Mecca every year. Its influence over the lives of those who perform it is often so great that it gives a new direction to character ; in every generation men and women have been roused from spiritual lethargy to become missionaries and leaders of Islam in all parts of the world by the experiences they have undergone in their Holy Land.

Lady Evelyn by publishing the account of her pilgrimage to Mecca has become the greatest missionary of Islam in England. Her book is finding its way not only to Society, where Lady Evelyn is a prominent member, but also to the general public, and is proving to be a revelation to all those who read it. Many enquiries about Islam are being addressed to Lady Evelyn, and a few people have already embraced Islam through first reading her book and then meeting her.

We feel sure our readers will agree that it is a book they should all read and present to their non-Muslim friends who are interested in Islam as we cannot think of a better introduction to Islam which is at the same time the fascinating story of a most interesting journey very charmingly told.—Ed. R. I.]

PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

Here are a few quotations from the various reviews :—

Unique in the real sense of that so often misapplied word. The author has a graphic pen for description, a humorous turn of mind, which is invaluable for adding individuality to delineation and a fresh and original point of view.—*Cornhill Magazine*.

The pilgrimage to Mecca has often been written about, but never before from the point of view of a Western woman convert to Islam. Lady Evelyn has a fresh and original point of view which clarifies many things in the Moslem religion to Western minds.—*The Sunday Times*.

As a record of individual religious experiences, influenced by an intimate knowledge of two great religions, Lady Evelyn Cobbold's book has a rare appeal of its own. If she may be thought to be a little prejudiced in favour of her adopted faith, we have been accustomed to hear in its disfavour so much which is based upon pure ignorance and antipathy that a little overpraise, if such it be, comes as a welcome relief.—*Manchester Guardian*.

Lady Evelyn's account of the pilgrimage itself is sufficient to make the book memorable, but even more interesting are the pages which deal with Arab life and customs of the present day.—*John O'London's Weekly*.

Her book is straightforward and honest, and its value is much enhanced by a number of unusual photographs of Mecca and Medina.—*The Times*.

An artless record, very readable, very sincere, and very reliable. Patently this book is written primarily for the English-speaking readers who may have entertained erroneous ideas upon the Islamic faith. By means of numerous quotations from the Qur-án and from writers sympathetic with Islam, Lady Evelyn Cobbold emphasizes the many admirable qualities of her faith.

It will doubtless be of much benefit to that large section of the West which yet thinks of Islam as something irrevocably opposed to Christianity. Its effects must be to promote not antagonism, but a better understanding between the two Semitic faiths which succeeded the Jewish religion.—Mr. Kenneth Williams in *The Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*.

To her Islam is the religion of common sense, and it is that engaging quality that is the medium in which she presents her impressions of Mecca and Medina. To the historical significance of the holy places she brings knowledge and faith. One is left with as profound a respect for her determination as for her religion.—*Country Life*.

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Valuable to all those interested in Islam and its practices.—
Spectator.

Those who profess and call themselves Christians must face the fact that, within the last few years, several notable people have, apparently for genuine, conscientious reasons, accepted the religion of Mohamed. If Christ is not at fault in the matter then his followers must be. The names occur to us offhand of the late Mr. Hedley Churchward, Lord Headley, Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall (Translator of the Koran) and Lady Evelyn Cobbold.

The last named has now written a most readable book about her *Pilgrimage to Mecca*. For the Christian her book must make sad reading, not because it is a sad story, but because she does appear to have found peace in such an unexpected quarter. It must be admitted that she has told her story with charm and ability, and that her description of the Holy Land and Holy Cities of Islam deserves to rank with the classic narratives of earlier European adventurers in the peninsula.—*The Belfast News-Letter*.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

MUSLIM EQUALITY¹

Dear Father, 'twas Thy loving care
Which did into our minds instil
The love for all Thy creatures here
And made us seek to do Thy will.

When we our anthems raise to Thee,
When foes around us press us sore,
O may we seek Thy face to see,
And learn to love Thee more and more.

O Father, may we live in Thee,
Do Thou our loving hearts enshroud,
We long Thy loveliness to see,
When we have to Thy wishes bowed.

'Tis not alone in open fight
In which we prostrate fall to Thee,
But it is when we do the RIGHT—
The outcome of Thy Majesty.

At certain times we fall before
The mercy seat that Thou hast raised,
And then we do Thy Name adore
And seek to see Thee loved and praised.

¹ Islamic Review.

A PLEA FOR THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

The King and beggar side by side
Sing the glad song of gratitude,
For Thou dost love them both the same
And giv'st them Thy Beatitude.

With Moses, Christ and Mahomet
Who gave to us Thy message sweet,
O may our steps towards Thee be set
And long Thy loving arms to greet.

HEADLEY.

A PLEA FOR THE STUDY OF THE QUR-ÁN

BY MUHAMMAD SAID-UD-DIN, M.A., LL.B.

(Continued from Vol. XXII, page 354.)

Nature has always its revenge. The laws of Nature can never be disobeyed with impunity. Nature wants people to believe in Unity. History bears witness to the fact that as long as and according to the extent to which nations have believed in Unity and its necessary corollary, the brotherhood of man, and in the good of one lying in the good of all, they prospered; and as soon as, and to the extent to which, they lost their faith in these truths and ceased to work for the good of all, they fell. In the economy of Nature, institutions as well as men and, in fact, all things conducive to the progress of the world and useful, are allowed to exist, and those that are, or become, beyond hope useless and detrimental to the well-being of humanity, are destroyed the moment they become so. It was in that way that the Romans and Greeks, and nearer home, the non-Aryans, Aryans and Muslims of India fell, each in their turn. The non-Aryans fell because of their paganism, because they would not believe that there is one God above and one vast brotherhood of man below, and that all other things that exist between heaven and earth are for the good of all men, and that all things, including man, have potentialities hidden in themselves;

that the object of the creation is that man, who is the vicegerent of God on earth and above all created beings, and therefore next to God, should so work as to bring out all the potentialities hidden in Nature for the good of the whole of mankind, as also those hidden in his own nature, so that the whole of mankind may become nearer and nearer the Divinity. This is the real significance of the worship of one God in the language of religion. This is what is called a belief in Unity. But what did the aborigines of India do? Instead of believing in this Unity of the whole system of the Universe, they began to worship anything and everything, from a stone to the highest creation of God, a man, and thus abandoned all efforts to bring out the potentialities hidden in Nature and in themselves. And, as a necessary consequence, their growth was stunted. When things had come to this pass God sent another nation to India, the Aryans, who flourished so long as they proved themselves useful to themselves and to others. But these also in their turn fell a victim to the same disease of worshipping anything and everything but the One God, and, setting aside the principle of Unity, they invented caste distinctions, and began to play the tyrant to such an extent that they even prevented the aborigines from hearing their own sacred books, the Vedas; or, indeed, anything of wisdom that was likely to raise them as a nation and be conducive to their progress. The result was to turn a large section of God's highest creatures into helots and slaves, whom they called Shudras, whose condition even up to this age of enlightenment is a disgrace to the other inhabitants of India. They despised the aborigines as animals and raised themselves to the position of gods, to be worshipped by these old inhabitants of India in the place of the One God, the worshipping of Whom alone is conducive to progress, while themselves remaining contented with the worship

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of anything and everything except the One God. To look down upon any man as inferior to you and to look up to any man, much less a lower being, as a god besides the One God, are both denials of Unity and both actions that stunt one's growth. Human capabilities are the same all the world over and, given an opportunity, the communities known as *chamars*, *pasis*,¹ etc., would have figured in history as philosophers and leaders of men, and would have borne comparison with the greatest men of any country or nation. It is to this capability of man that the Qur-án invites attention when it says :

والتين والزيتون وطور سينين
 وهذا البلد الامين
 لقد خلقنا الانسان في احسن تقويم

“The fig (referring to Buddha) ; the olives (referring to Christ) ; and the Mount of Sinai (pointing to Moses) ; and this city of security (Mecca—pointing to Abraham), bear testimony (to the fact) that We created man in the best of constitutions.” Aye ! with the worship of the One God these *chamars* and *pasis*, these Shudras of India, would have risen to the stature of not only Newtons and Socrates but to that of such supermen as the prophets. But what do we see instead ?—A nation, not of supermen, and not of Newtons, but a nation of helots.

ثم ردناه سفل السافلين الا الذين امنوا وعملوا الصالحات

“Then We reduced man to the status of the lowliest of the lowly, excepting those who have faith and do good deeds.”

So long as the Aryans were worshippers of one God in the true sense of the word they produced any number of supermen. Probably Shri Krishna and Ramachandra were such personages. But instead of emulating them and treading in their steps, keeping them before their eyes as exemplars, and striving to grow to their stature, they conveniently,

¹ Different classes of untouchables in India.

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to avoid such an uphill task, placed those great personages on the pedestal of Godhead and worshipped them. This had the further result that they have come down headlong to the depth of the "lowliest of the lowly." A fallen or declining nation acquires a queer habit of worshipping anything or any man that appears to them extraordinary, and instead of profiting by them by utilizing the one or following the other, they raise them to unattainable heights with the result that the potentialities of the one remain unexploited, and the other, that is, the superman, becomes a mythical being surrounded by all sorts of queer and meaningless fables, with the further consequences that there being no exemplars before them whom they can successfully emulate, their own potentialities too, like the potentialities in Nature, remain hidden and even become stunted or destroyed. In this way, alas! we have lost the true accounts of supermen like Shri Krishna and Shri Ganesh, and are quite in the dark about such evolved beings as Jesus, Moses and similar great personages of the world; and if mankind does not wake up in time, we may lose an opportunity of profiting by the example of the Holy Prophet, who is the last of the Prophets and the only historical personage that remains to us to emulate and follow. It is, indeed, sad that even some of the Muslims in India are following in the wake of the Aryans, who, in their turn, had followed in the wake of the non-Aryans, and are fast developing the old habit of raising not only their Holy Prophet, but even lesser personages called saints, to the status of so many gods surrounded by myth and legend. To cite just one example of their fall from the ideal, none of them now cares to know who Khwaja Muinuddin of Ajmere, for example, was, whence he came and what he did to raise the people of India, not with the help of the sword but by his own example and precept. As a matter of fact no one can raise a nation with the help of the

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sword or the subtler kind of oppression of which the Aryans were guilty, *viz.*, by constantly instilling into the ears of the conquered nations, not the words of the Vedas or wisdom, but other words to the effect that they were born slaves and destined for all their lives to be such. I say that by oppression you can make *chamars* and *pasis* of human beings, but you cannot make a whole dynasty of slaves rulers, as the early Muslims did. Says the Qur-án: "There is no compulsion in matters of religion—convictions—for the right path is in itself distinct from the wrong path." I say, with oppression you cannot convince a man, much less raise a nation ; and history bears testimony to the fact that Islam raised all nations with which it came in contact. Muslims fell, whenever they fell, on account of a clever method of corruption employed by those very people whom they tried to raise, that is, by making them imbibe the very same pernicious habit of adoring any man who appeared to them out of the ordinary, instead of emulating his character. I say, conviction and oppression cannot go hand in hand, for the one implies an appeal to reason, while the other leads to its suppression. Belief is a higher form of knowledge though often confounded by ignorant people with superstition, which has nothing to do with knowledge, much less with belief. You can degrade people by oppression, and then, being deprived of their power of reasoning, they will become superstitious ; but you cannot raise a people by oppression. In history, whosoever has succeeded in raising any people has succeeded by means of propagating, more or less, the true religion—for in their pristine purity all religions, whether of the Aryans, non-Aryans, Semites, Egyptians, Greeks, etc., are the same which, in the language of the Qur-án, may be called Islam ; with this difference only, that the Islam as taught by the last Prophet is the fuller and more evolved. They succeeded in raising their respective peoples by

appealing to their reason, and by drawing their attention to the laws of Nature. In this way alone all the above-named and other nations of the world came to power. Their rise was due to their appeal to reason, and their fall to their suppression of it. To say that any religion was propagated by means of the sword, *i.e.*, oppression of the people and suppression of their reasoning powers is, on the face of it, absurd ; but to say that the religion of the Qur-án, which for the first time, in so many words, taught the world that there is no compulsion in religion, for, that the right path in itself is distinct from the wrong, was so propagated, is, to put it mildly, childish. So, when and so far as the Aryans, for example, raised themselves and those who came in contact with them, they were teaching the one true religion, and when and so far as they degraded themselves or made Shudras of the aborigines of India, by suppressing their reasoning powers and their own, they were not teaching any religion or any system of life, but simply oppressing their own kith and kin and others. So God sent another nation comparatively more virile—for it had stronger faith in Unity and the brotherhood of man than the now degraded non-Aryan and Aryan races,—I mean the Muslims, who flourished in India, as pioneers of civilization, for a considerable time by converting—converting not in the vulgar and absurd sense in which both Hindus and Muslims are indulging nowadays—people to nobler conceptions of the Unity of God and brotherhood of man, by raising the status of the depressed classes by taking them into their own fold and by conferring on them human rights hitherto denied them by the Aryans. But soon they too fell victims to the same disease. They began to divide their own people into castes, to look down on those conquered by their predecessors, and to indulge in luxuries at the cost of their own co-religionists and others, but before the mischief done to their own selves and to others could go further, and before they could succeed,

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like the Aryans, in turning God's people—for every one is born free, as the Qur-án says, and it is only his parents and his surroundings that make him a bondman and slave to superstitions and customs, etc.,—into Pariahs,¹ God, by His Divine Providence, sent yet another nation, the English. These, through their missionaries, took up that same good work of raising the depressed classes which had been abandoned by both the Aryans and the Muslims, and, enlightened both Hindus and Muslims by imparting education more or less liberal on more up-to-date lines than the effete system formerly in vogue with the garrulous pandits and mullas who were so unlike these Christians. The last-named have left their dark age now far behind when they also worshipped anything and everything except the One true God, though calling themselves followers of an apostle of Unity, viz., Jesus Christ. To-day the so-called Christians, or even atheists, of Europe are, at heart, greater believers in the Unity of God, so far as their worldly and rational interests are concerned in spite of their outwardly subscribing to the doctrines of the Trinity and the like, than are the Hindus, or even the Muslims, in spite of the latter's lip-profession of the Unity of God.

So, whether it be Hindu, Jew, Christian, or Muslim, whoever believes, as the Qur-án says, in the Unity of God and brotherhood of man, not by way of lip-profession but as a matter of practical politics, which can be exemplified in action, those alone are inheritors of paradise, not only in the life to come, as I have already shown above by quoting the Qur-án, where the Jews and Christians are stated to claim salvation for their own respective communities, but also in this very life, for says the Qur-án :

وَرِثَهَا عَبْدِي الصَّالِحِينَ

“And We confer the inheritance of it, the earth—that is its sovereignty—on those of Our creatures who are fit.”

¹ A class of untouchables in Madras.

This is why at present the European nations are flourishing and will flourish so long as their doing good to their own people and to others exceeds their oppression of others within their own fold or outside it ; but when their evil deeds exceed their good deeds, they will also fall, just as the Hindus and Muslims of India fell, and just as any nation in the past fell. They are prospering, not because of their oppression of people (of which also they may be guilty more or less), but on account of the good they are doing to others, *e.g.*, by means of their schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, orphanages, poor-houses, and other measures adopted for the amelioration of the lot of the poor in Europe and elsewhere. To the extent to which and for so long as they benefit others, or, in other words, serve Nature—for worshipping God is another word for serving Nature—that is, as long as they consider that their good lies in the good of others, they will prosper. This is the law of Nature. It is to this law that the Qur-án most emphatically and in various ways points. This law alone explains the rise and fall of a nation or an individual. Self-aggrandizement is never paying, mutual help alone is. Hence the necessity of belief in the Unity of God and brotherhood of man, which alone would solve the problems raised by caste, colour and creed distinctions, by the monopoly and greed of the capitalists and money-lenders, by the lethargy and fatalism of the labourers and other exploited classes, for all these problems have arisen out of want of belief in the Unity of God and the brotherhood of man and out of man's unmindfulness of the future. Men should always bear in mind the warning of the Qur-án already referred to, *viz.*, history bears testimony to the fact that surely man is the loser, except those who have faith, do good deeds and enjoin on each other truthfulness and enjoin on each other forbearance.

You may say that, now that you have understood that the laws of Nature must be studied in order to

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ensure unity and progress, you will, do the study on your own account, without heeding to consult the Qur-án. Would you then close the schools, colleges, and universities; burn the books, and stop the lectures which, are attempting to open men's eyes to certain laws of Nature, simply because all or some men know that all that they have got to do is to study the laws of Nature, and that they themselves can do it without exhortation and without having the truth pointed out to them by any one specially versed in the lore of truth? If you will not, certainly you cannot ignore the best possible literature supplied by God Himself through the mouth of the best exemplar to mankind and the most highly versed in the laws of Nature. The Qur-án offers the best study of Nature and contains the best exhortations to that study. It has roused the consciousness of man more than anything else has done in the past.

So the Qur-án is not inviting you to any narrow and dark groove of priestcraft which may lead you to narrow-mindedness, stagnation, and even destruction; on the contrary it is exhorting you to come out into the open, even from the groove in which the so-called freethinkers are moving. The so-called freethinkers are not freethinkers in the real sense of the word. Islam does invite people to think freely by appealing to their reason and directing their attention to the workings of Nature. In fact, to have no religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, is to be religious in the sense in which the word is used in the Qur-án. The more you are a freethinker, provided you are really a freethinker and are under no delusion or self-deception, the more religious you are. But though every one is born a freethinker, few really remain so, for their parents and their society in which they are born corrupt them by prejudicing their minds and narrowing their visions by the customs, habits,

superstitions already prevailing in their midst, hence the need of a revelation. The Qur-án has beautifully explained how man, who is born a freethinker, is corrupted by his parents and society and becomes narrow-minded and creed-bound.

That the so-called freethinkers of the world are narrow-minded, in spite of their not believing in the so-called religions, is apparent from the fact that they still maintain distinctions of caste, colour, creed, position, etc., and do not believe in the eternal truth, that the good of one lies in the good of all. Though they have ever on their lips such catchwords as civilization, liberty, fraternity, swaraj,¹ and independence, yet the people in the West as well as in the East are exploiting others for their own self-aggrandisement. There are swarajists, independents, non-co-operators, changers, no-changers, liberals, etc., etc., but had they appreciated the best message ever delivered for the uplift of humanity, India would have long ago attained to the position which Europe and America have reached, and had Europe and America appreciated the message of the Qur-án still further, they would have risen and raised the whole earth to the zenith of glory which is still the world's far-off dream.

I have tried to point out that the message of the Qur-án is not only higher and nobler than what is taught in the name of religion by so many so-called religious peoples, but is also higher and nobler than what is taught anywhere in the world by any other race,—their greatest philosophers, thinkers and reformers, present or past. True, there are certain formalities mentioned in the Qur-án, but it is clearly pointed out that they are mere formalities, however necessary they or their like may be at certain stages of the progress of any society. For example, the form of the buildings of

¹ Home rule.

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any educational institution, certain systems of discipline prevailing there, the modes of the dress of the students, etc., etc., are but formalities, however necessary they may be at any particular stage. The underlying purpose has, however, not much to do with building, dress or mode of living but is intended to build up the character of the students, and to bring about their intellectual, moral, and social uplift. Islam does not care for any particular country, people, or age, but provides for the uplift of every country and of every race, at every stage of its progress. Men in the earlier stages of progress, like children, require more stringent disciplinary measures in the shape of formalities, but the more they progress and the more they imbibe the spirit underlying those formalities, the less they stand in need thereof. The Prophet says, "You are in an age in which if you abandon one-tenth of what is now ordered, you will be ruined. After this, a time will come when he who will observe one-tenth of what is now ordered will be saved." So do not fear rituals; they will not make you a mulla. The so-called Muslims lost a good deal, like the Jews and Christians of old, by sticking to the letter and form against which the Qur-án repeatedly warns us. The wranglings of the mullas or of priests in any religion are due to this folly of sticking to the letter and the form. You can dispense with the form if you do not benefit therefrom, but you cannot dispense with the spirit underlying it. You have got to be prayerful, you have got to keep control over your desires and passions, you have got to be charitable, and you have got to organise a brotherhood of humanity with yourselves as its centre, so that with the aid of all this you may unite the whole world into one brotherhood and lead them to limitless progress. The institutions of the Islamic prayers (specially congregational prayers), fasting, *zakat*, and pilgrimage, are however the best possible formalities and

by far the most conducive to the achievement of the brotherhood and progress of man, if they are accompanied by the spirit underlying them, *viz.*, the faith in the Unity of God. A child has to undergo so many disciplinary measures before he becomes a scholar or a gentleman. So is the case with a nation or a country or any section of mankind, for the Qur-án points out clearly, as nowhere else has it been pointed out, that there is evolution in nature. Revelation is the most important phase of the law of evolution, of which a revelation is a mere outward manifestation.

So, all you have to do is but to imbibe the spirit which pervades the whole message of the Qur-án, the burden of whose song is the relief of poverty and distress throughout the world.

The peace of the two worlds is a commentary upon two words, kindness to friends and charity towards enemies.

CORRESPONDENCE

PORTSMOUTH.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.
DEAR BROTHER IN ISLAM,

Assalamo Alaikum !

I am writing to thank you for your great kindness in inviting me to stay with you for a few days at the Mosque. I cannot express in words my gratitude for all the valuable time which you spent in teaching me various things about our beautiful religion. My only regret is that I did not take advantage of your previous invitation. Everyone did his best to make me feel quite at home, and all were very friendly, as, indeed, brothers of the Great and True Religion should be. What impressed me most was that during the whole of my stay not one word was spoken against any other form of belief. How different from my experience of a few days ago ! I was listening to a Salvation Army Band when one of the officers, whom I knew slightly, came over to me and asked if I would care to attend their meeting. I

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told him that my religion suited me quite well, and I could pray to God without the aid of a big brass band. He asked me to explain, and when I told him that I was a Muslim and recited certain verses of the Holy Qur-án. He asked me to stop. "For," he said, "you are a lost soul, my brother, and are heading straight for hell." With that he left me and now avoids me each time he sees me coming towards him.

Can you explain why each sect of the Christian religion hates all the other sects? A Clergyman once told me that no one could possibly go to Heaven unless he belonged to *the Church of England*. Of course, he was an Anglican.

Several of my friends in this town have become very interested in Islam, and I have invited them to meet one evening each week for a friendly exchange of views. I shall keep you informed of our progress. Wishing you all concerned in the good work the peace of Allah.

I remain, yours fraternally,

SADIK J. BROMLEY.

DEAR IMAM,

STREATHAM.

I have been studying and reading books on Islam, and now I am very serious to become a Muslim.

Would you please send me all particulars and instructions that you consider I need.

Yours sincerely,

NINA R. DARKE.

DEAR IMAM,

STREATHAM.

I am very sad to find that it will not be possible for me to visit the Mosque on Sundays for a few weeks, owing to the difficulty of my work, but as I do not wish to delay the adoption of Islam, I am returning the declaration form duly filled in.

Yours in Islam,

NINA R. DARKE.

THE EDITOR,
The Islamic Review, WOKING.

DEAR BROTHER IN FAITH,

LEEDS.

Assalamo Alaikum!

I must apologise for being rather lax in my letters to you lately, although I would like to assure you that this does not mean

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that I am taking any less interest in Islamic affairs. Such is very far from the case. Indeed, one of the purposes of this letter is to congratulate you on the current number of the *Islamic Review*. I think it is an excellent issue, and I read with avidity the article entitled "Modern Turkey and Islam" by Dr. Otto Speis, dealing, as it does, with the question which is of vital importance to all Muslims and even to the Islamic faith itself.

When the writer refers to the agitation to have prayers said in Turkish instead of Arabic, then, indeed, I think we are face to face with a question which demands great firmness on the part of all concerned. Let me say at once that I am in entire agreement with your footnote. The use of Arabic for prayers is, in my opinion, one of the fundamentals of Islam. It ensures that every Muslim, wheresoever he may be, is quite at home in his religious life, and he can join in the prayers in any Mosque, in any country just as if he was at home. For my part, the learning of sufficient Arabic for prayers was my first concern, taking care, of course, that I fully understood the British equivalent, and I derived, in consequence, great spiritual benefit from the reflection that my Muslim brothers in all climes were praying in the same way and in the same words. The general use of Arabic is a great unifying influence, and it will be a black day for Islam, if, and when, any considerable body of our Muslim brothers abandon its use.

I have recently had the pleasure of reading Lady Evelyn Cobbold's excellent book "A Pilgrimage to Mecca," and I enjoyed it thoroughly. It gave such a graphic account of the various incidents that it seemed as though I myself was in the writer's place.

Yours in Islam,

SALIM FIRTH.

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace; (2) the way to achieve peace; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, is however, the last of the Prophets. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-AN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number : belief in (1) Allah ; (2) Angels ; (3) Books from God ; (4) Messengers from God ; (5) the Hereafter ; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil ; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress ; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination ; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number: (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad ; (2) Prayer ; (3) Fasting ; (4) Almsgiving ; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the

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Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.